IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An animal litter comprising:

non-swelling particles; and

bentonite particles ~~a swelling agent~~ coated on said non-swelling particles.

2. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said non-swelling particles are clay particles.

3. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 2 ~~1~~ wherein said clay particles comprise agglomerated clay fines.

4. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 3 wherein said clay fines have a size of about 50 mesh.

5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said bentonite particles are ~~swelling agent is~~ a powder.

7. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said bentonite particles have ~~swelling agent has~~ a size range of about 100 mesh to about 300 mesh.

8. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 7 wherein said bentonite particles have ~~swelling agent has~~ a size of about 200 mesh.

9. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said non-swelling particles have a size range of about –10 to about +50 mesh.

10. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said bentonite particles are ~~swelling agent is~~ about 20% to about 40% by weight of said animal litter.

11. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 10 wherein said bentonite particles are ~~swelling agent is~~ about 25% to about 35% by weight of said animal litter.

12. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 11 wherein said bentonite particles are ~~swelling agent is~~ about 28% by weight of said animal litter.

13. (original) An absorbent material comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh; and

a coating for said particles, said coating comprising a bentonite powder.

14. (original) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said particles are agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size.

15. (currently amended) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said powder ~~coating~~ comprises powder particles of about 200 mesh in size.

16. (currently amended) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said powder ~~coating~~ comprises powder particles in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight of said absorbent material.

17. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh, said particles being agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size; and

a coating for said particles, said coating comprising bentonite.

18. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises a bentonite powder.

19. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises a bentonite powder and guar gum powder blend.

20. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises an odor control agent.

21. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises an anti-microbial agent.

22. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 18 ~~17~~ wherein said coating comprises bentonite particles with a size of about 200 mesh.

23. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles comprise Calcium-Montmorillonite fines.

24. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles have a moisture content from about 20% to about 40% before being coated.

25. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles have a moisture content from about 28% to about 34% before being coated.

26. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said litter has a moisture content from about 5% to about 15%.

27. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 26 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 8%.

28. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating is from about 20% to about 40% by weight of said litter.

29. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 28 wherein said coating is from about 25% to about 35% by weight of said litter.

30. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 29 wherein said coating is about 30% by weight of said litter.

31. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein the clay fines are agglomerated in a pin mixer.

32. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a clumping animal litter comprising:

agglomerating clay fines into particles; and

coating the particles with a bentonite powder.

33. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating clay fines using a pin mixer.

34. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating a blend of clay fines and bentonite fines using a pin mixer.

35. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating bentonite fines using a pin mixer.

36. (canceled)

37. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles with a bentonite powder and guar gum powder blend.

38. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles with a powder blended with a fragrance.

39. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles using at least one of a fluidized bed dryer, a semi-continuous centrifugal coater, and a rotary coating and drying system.

40. (original) A method according to Claim 32 further comprising drying the coated particles.

41. (original) A method according to Claim 40 wherein drying the coated particles comprises drying the particles to a moisture content from about 5% to about 15%.

42. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight of a coated particle.

43. (original) A method according to Claim 42 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 25% to about 35% by weight of a coated particle.

44. (original) A method according to Claim 43 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 28% by weight of a coated particle.

45. (original) A clumping animal litter comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh in size; and

bentonite powder of about 200 mesh, said powder applied as a coating to said particles in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight.

46. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size.

47. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said bentonite powder is sprayed ~~in a low concentration solution~~ on said clay particles placed in a fluidized bed.

48. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 5% to about 15%.

49. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 48 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 8%.

50. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from a blend of clay fines and bentonite fines of about -50 mesh in size.

51. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from bentonite fines of about -50 mesh in size.